

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : Mr. Mohr

FROM : C. D. DeLoach

DATE: February 25, 1964

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT

Dick Berlin called for the Director at 12:07 p.m., 2/25/64. Upon being informed of the Director's absence from the office, he asked to speak to me. I was at the Bethesda Naval Hospital at the time for a physical examination. I called Mr. Berlin back at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Berlin advised that one of their good young reporters, who is considered to be very reliable, has learned from sources in Dallas, also from members of Congress and from one recently released FBI Agent, that both Jack Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald were informants of the FBI prior to the time President Kennedy was assassinated. Berlin stated that his reporter had pledged not to reveal the name of this former Agent. He also indicated that Melvin Belli, the attorney for the defense in the Ruby case, had told this reporter that Oswald was an FBI informant.

The alleged sources in Congress who told the Hearst reporter about this matter additionally advised him that it was entirely possible that J. Edgar Hoover at FBI Headquarters in Washington would never be consulted about local informants. The reporter argued that this appeared to be sufficient proof that Ruby and Oswald could have been informants without the Director or FBI Headquarters knowing about it. Belli told the reporter that he wouldn't care to comment so much regarding Ruby's connections with the FBI but that he knew from reliable sources that Ruby had been an informant for 8 weeks and Oswald an informant for 13 weeks. Belli additionally told the reporter that Ruby informed on gamblers and people of low character, and that Oswald was a security-type informant.

Mr. Berlin said he wanted to let the Director know about this matter at once. I told him that the Director already knew of this rumor that that was an old, old story without a scintilla of truth to it. I went into some detail with Mr. Berlin explaining that these careless rumors came from 3 different sources: (1) I explained the matter of Senator Eastland, Chairman of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, and Jay Sourwine, Counsel of that Committee, having picked up this information from a Colonel Philip Corso who is employed by Senator Strom Thurmond. I told Mr. Berlin we had confronted Corso and he had backed down. Corso claimed that he merely deduced such facts on the basis of his prior experience in military intelligence. I told Mr. Berlin that Corso had very faulty logic and was a "dreamer"; (2) I mentioned the drive by the Communist Party to

1 - Mr. Belmont APR 13 1964  
1 - Mr. Rosen  
1 - Mr. Sullivan  
1 - M. A. Jones  
CDD:amr (5)  
9 APR 22 1964

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APR 13 1964

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**DeLoach to Mohr memo  
Re: Assassination of the President**

disprove the fact that Oswald was a confirmed Marxist by alleging that Oswald was a spy for either the FBI or CIA; (3) I told Mr. Berlin that the "recently released former Agent" was undoubtedly one William Turner who was dismissed with prejudice for making false and defamatory statements about the FBI. I additionally mentioned the incident involving the reporter by the name of Hudkins who had refused to back up his statements previously made to Henry Wade, the prosecutor in Dallas, Texas. Insofar as Belli was concerned, I told Mr. Berlin he might like to consider the source inasmuch as Belli would use every subterfuge possible in order to get publicity for himself and to get his client, Ruby, off the hook on a plea of insanity. [REDACTED]

Mr. Berlin agreed that the allegations were undoubtedly false and stated that he was satisfied and that no action would be taken by the Hearst papers. He asked, however, that I call Kingsbury Smith, publisher of the "Journal American," and tell him the same facts. He stated Mr. Smith could be reached at COLUMBUS 7-7454, his unlisted number at the "Journal American" offices.

I talked to Mr. Smith at approximately 4:20 p.m., 2/25/64, and he related to me the same facts as previously given by Mr. Berlin, however, added that the Hearst reporter had a tape recording of Melvin Belli making the above-mentioned allegations. I went into some detail refuting the same allegations that both Mr. Berlin and Mr. Smith had mentioned. In conclusion, I told Mr. Smith that Belli's allegations, particularly on tape, would necessitate our interviewing him and asking him to put up or shut up. He stated he thought this would be necessary and agreed it should be done. Mr. Smith concluded by stating that the article would not be published in the Hearst papers; however, he felt that Belli would continue his gabbing and some other paper might carry these allegations. I told him that other publications had already carried almost the same rumors. I mentioned former Agent Turner's article in "SAGA" magazine as well as the article in "Nation" magazine and the articles by the Communist Party. Mr. Smith was not familiar with these articles, however, stated he could see the rumors were being well played.

Both Mr. Berlin and Mr. Smith were completely satisfied concerning our refutation of these allegations.

### Action:

It is suggested this memorandum be forwarded to the Domestic Intelligence Division and that consideration be given to immediately interviewing Belli concerning the above-mentioned allegations which he allegedly gave to "Journal American" reporter on tape. Neither Messrs. Berlin nor Smith desired to reveal the name of their reporter. I did not push them in this regard in view of their close friendship to the Director and the Bureau. I do feel, however, that if it is necessary we can obtain a copy of the tape they claim the reporter has obtained from Belli.

~~Yes. Make him  
either pull up or  
shut up.~~